

Exhibitions

Reinstallation of the South Asian Galleries

Philadelphia Museum of Art
October 2016

Perhaps first among the Philadelphia Museum of Art's many distinctions is the extent to which historic architecture is integrated into its galleries—vestiges, together with period rooms, of director Fiske Kimball's transformation of the institution from a museum of craft to one of contextualized material culture.¹ Nowhere is this legacy more evident today than along the approach to the museum's South Asian collection, via the south wing's central galleries, through a series of medieval European architectural ensembles. The eastward turn to the wing's outer arm corresponds to an analogous cultural shift. The view along this axis reveals, in nested succession, a barrel-vaulted Sassanian portal, an archway flanked by Safavid tile work, and the fantastically figured granite pillars of a South Indian temple hall (Figure 1).

So strong is the pull along this axis of monumental architecture that only the most astute might notice a small doorway—to an introductory gallery—on the right. The rest of us, indulgently, will proceed ahead to the South Asian galleries' centerpiece: an assemblage of architectural elements from a mid-sixteenth-century Hindu temple pavilion, purchased by a wealthy Philadelphian who had honeymooned in

India in 1912. Standing exactly where it has since this wing opened in 1940, this hall, like the galleries it anchors, has been brilliantly transformed by curator Darielle Mason. Her comprehensive reinstallation of the South Asian galleries—their first in four decades—reanimates Philadelphia's world-class collection.

Previously presented as an internal chamber of a temple, this hall was dark, mysterious, even foreboding. Mason brings the structure out of the shadows to convey its actual original siting as a freestanding, open-air pavilion. Light now spills down around its outer colonnade, reflecting off gallery walls painted light blue to evoke midday Indian daylight. The structure's previously dim interior now gently glows, lending a new legibility to its sculptural program. Emblematic of the entire reinstallation, this central gallery, formerly obscured, is now enlightened: open, inviting, and accessible. Benches welcome visitors inside, and nifty gallery guides—formatted like fanned paint-color decks—introduce them to the mythic figures on its columns. Bronze sculptures and colorful textiles now join guests within the colonnades, and a nearby looping video of footage shot within the temple complex where this pavilion once stood conveys the activity, color, and noise that would once have filled it. The temple hall, once again, lives.

The visitor has choices where to venture next. A large Mongolian bronze of the Buddhist goddess Tara beckons one into the Himalayan gallery, a component of the renovation that feels not yet fully realized. Or, lured by the temple video, one can enter a trio of galleries that have long housed the core Indian collection. Like the temple hall, these spaces have been altered subtly in ways that make for more engaging, far richer presentations. Their doorways, now aligned—and reaching into the Southeast

Asian gallery—reveal the collection's embarrassment of sculptural riches. Exterior windows have been covered, allowing for mixing of media—including light-sensitive paintings and textiles—in thematic groupings that cross periods, places, and religious traditions to explore pan-Indian concepts. Diffused window light and painted-concrete floors are replaced by warm gallery lighting and wooden flooring, and blue walls—carried over from the temple hall—enhance earth-toned sculptures and colorful paintings and textiles.

Rotations from the deep collection are built into these galleries' design, with versatile casework allowing for easy modification of object groupings and the themes they elucidate. In this way, too, the galleries feel alive. Generous traditional didactics—printed text panels and object labels—expertly guide the visitor, who will intuitively know how to calibrate their use to the desired depth of detail. Promising even deeper dives, a handful of interactive digital kiosks are perhaps harder to control, the layered offerings of their glowing, tactilely responsive screens easily seducing the visitor away from the very objects they explore. While the instructive potential of accompanying didactics varies, where Mason's team excels is in the didactics of display itself. Case in point: In the smallest of these core galleries, dedicated to temple sculpture, a full-wall photomural shows the exterior of a North Indian temple. Installed directly onto this two-dimensional image, matching its scale and resonating with its iconography, are sculptures from the collection. As with her achievement in the temple hall, Mason breathes life into these sculptural fragments by exhibiting them in a way that requires the visitor's active participation.

Rivaling the temple hall's immersive experience is a diminutive gallery housing

Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 77, no. 1 (March 2018), 109–118, ISSN 0037-9808, electronic ISSN 2150-5926. © 2018 by the Society of Architectural Historians. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Reprints and Permissions web page, <http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints>, or via email: jpermissions@ucpress.edu. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2018.77.1.109>.



Figure 1 Interior of a pillared temple hall from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, ca. 1550, installed in the South Asian Galleries, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2016 (photo courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art).

another Kimball-period architectural installation, once fatigued but newly invigorated. Displayed under the honeycomb-like *muqarnas* of a Safavid-period vaulted archway is a single object, an exquisitely illuminated Indian manuscript. Near-contemporary products of Persianate court culture, the book and the architecture are well matched, but Mason's biggest curatorial gamble—and one that pays off handsomely—is the animation of the two, literally, with a third work. On the back wall of the tiny domed cubiculum beyond the vaulted archway plays a video commissioned from Shahzia Sikander, its imagery inspired by the manuscript's illustrations. This hypnotic work, and its enveloping soundscape by Du Yun, brings alive the manuscript's subject—the soul's longing for mystical union with God—in ways no amount of accompanying didactics ever could.

Finally, there is that gallery, off to the right, so easily forgone for the temple hall. Here the history of Philadelphia's Indian

collection is told through the story of the curator who built it, Stella Kramrisch. Among the objects displayed from her personal collection is one of the museum's great masterpieces, a sandstone lingam—the phallic-shaped symbol of Shiva—from which emerges the Hindu god's visage. Set before another dramatic photomural, this sublime work is oriented toward that small door most of us will not have used. Save for approaching this masterwork in profile, there is, I think, little disadvantage to this room's serving as an appendix, rather than a preface, to the galleries. While Kramrisch's contributions to the collection are undeniable, the South Asian galleries are now Mason's.

JOHN HENRY RICE
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Note

1. See Kathleen Curran, "From Craft to *Kulturgeschichte* in Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Museum of Art, 1876–1928," in *The Invention of the American Art Museum: From Craft to Kulturgeschichte, 1870–1930* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2016).

Giuliano da Sangallo: Disegni degli Uffizi

Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Uffizi, Florence

16 May–20 August 2017

The five hundredth anniversary of Giuliano da Sangallo's death in 1516 has provided the impetus for a flood of new works on the otherwise understudied Florentine architect. Sabine Frommel's 2014 monograph on Giuliano's built work was joined in 2016 by a study day devoted to Giuliano at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, and 2017 saw the publication of the proceedings from a conference on Giuliano held in June 2012 at the Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio in Vicenza.¹ Also in 2017, the Uffizi presented the exhibition *Giuliano da Sangallo: Disegni degli Uffizi*. New research related to these venues explored aspects of Giuliano's oeuvre in need of further investigation, in particular his work as a sculptor and military architect, and studies by emerging and

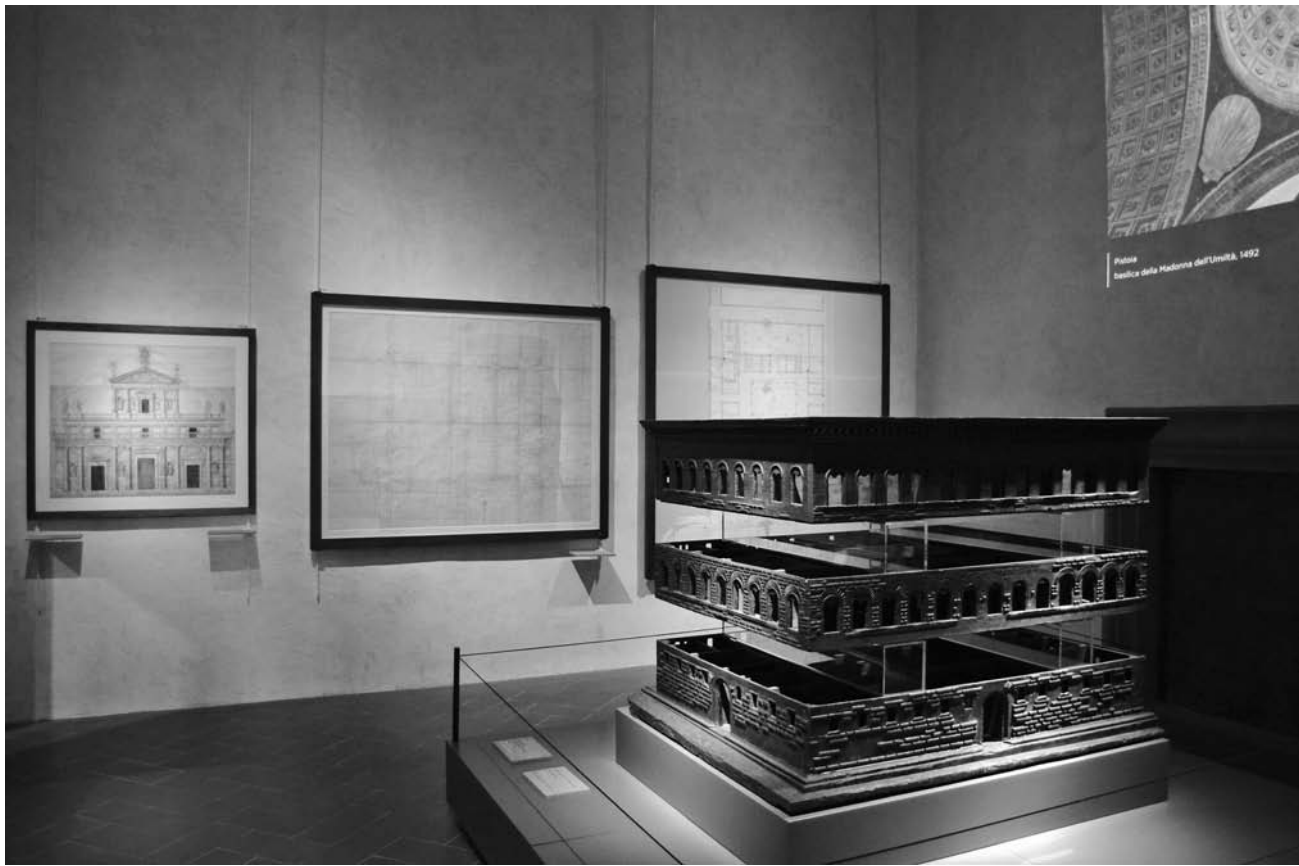


Figure 1 Installation view of *Giuliano da Sangallo: Disegni degli Uffizi*, Uffizi, Florence, 2017 (photo by Dario Donetti).

established scholars have already done much to overturn the outdated notion of Giuliano as a misfit architect caught between the Florentine fifteenth century and the Roman High Renaissance.

The Uffizi exhibition, curated by Dario Donetti, Marzia Faietti, and Sabine Frommel, was conceived as part of the reframing of Giuliano. The curators presented a near-monographic study in drawings, an ambitious goal made possible by the extensive architectural holdings of the Uffizi's Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, from which the exhibition was chiefly drawn. The works on paper were supplemented by a slide show of evocative black-and-white photographs by Václav Sedy of Giuliano's built works not represented in the Uffizi holdings. Rounding out the exhibition materials were the wooden model of the Palazzo Strozzi, newly restored for the exhibition, and a tondo of the *Virgin and Child with Saint John and an Angel* from the National Gallery in London. Now attributed to the Botticelli workshop, the painting was exhibited in Florence in a double-sided

vitrine to show the putative signature of Giuliano on the back.

The unexpected inclusion of the *Virgin and Child* tondo arose from one of the exhibition's most welcome curatorial decisions: the unified presentation of Giuliano's figural and architectural production. Until recently the tradition has been to study each medium independently: "Raffaello architetto," "Bramante pittore." While specialization presents practical advantages for scholars, in the early modern period separations between media were hardly so clear-cut. In light of the recent restoration of the polychrome crucifix attributed to Giuliano and his brother Antonio in the church of Santissima Annunziata, a holistic treatment of Giuliano's varied artistic production was particularly timely. Among the figural drawings were also small surprises: two sheets from the Albertina were shown with a pair of Uffizi drawings, and the juxtaposition compellingly illustrated the common subject of Judith and Holofernes proposed by Marzia Faietti in the exhibition catalogue.

Alongside the figural drawings were a series of sheets connected with the 1515–16 competition for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence, many of which came from Giorgio Vasari's collection. This arrangement highlighted the imaginative three-dimensionality of Giuliano's architectural drawing. In one design for a basilical church (Uffizi 278 A), painting, sculpture, and architecture all rose in a vibrant, almost sculptural relief. Graphic vivacity was observable even in plans, such as a project for a Medici villa in Via Laura (Uffizi 282 A) in which the variegated wash of gardens, stables, and lodgings outshone the adjoining city fabric like rich inlay against dull stone. Some of the most impressive drawings in this regard were not part of the main mise-en-scène, as for practical reasons the largest drawings were relegated to a small side gallery (Figure 1). This limitation of the historic space was turned to the exhibition's advantage, with the space functioning as a graphic table of contents: visible from either entrance to the small gallery was the most visually

arresting of the San Lorenzo drawings (Uffizi 281 A). Beside it was Giuliano's plan of Pisa, a huge drawing composed of twenty-four smaller sheets that blended precise survey with idealized antiquarian reconstruction and projected work, representing present, past, and future as an indivisible whole. A large residential plan for another planned Medici villa, in Rome's Piazza Navona, rounded out the triad of sacred, military, and residential architecture.

The exhibition also included the familiar drawings for Saint Peter's Basilica. Bramante's filigree half-plan, the well-known Uffizi 1 A, was effectively placed opposite the main entrance to the exhibition. Flanking it, in a double-sided mounting, was the solid, square plan with which Giuliano responded to the implausibly thin piers of Bramante's proposal, with Bramante's reply quickly sketched in red chalk on the verso (Uffizi 8 A). These drawings are an astonishing survival that testifies to two architects' debate over the most important architectural commission of the Italian Renaissance. Considering that Giuliano has sometimes been cast as a second-rate foil to the genius of Bramante, the curators' decision to let the drawings stand on their own was understandable, but nonspecialists were unlikely to grasp the vivid narrative without an explanatory text. The excellent catalogue describes the historical context in detail, but unfortunately no consultation copies of that publication were available in digital or paper form to bridge the gap. Virtual materials were used successfully elsewhere; a partial digital facsimile helped make up for the absence of the Barberini Codex, which rarely leaves the Vatican.

The diversity of the drawings on display in *Giuliano da Sangallo: Disegni degli Uffizi* reflected the growing trend in the study of early modern architecture away from neat categories and straightforward narratives. Giuliano himself, never easily classified but undoubtedly original, is perhaps the ideal architect to represent this shift.

CARA RACHELE

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zurich

Related Publication

Dario Donetti, Marzia Faietti, and Sabine Frommel, eds., *Giuliano da Sangallo: Disegni degli Uffizi* (Florence: Giunti, 2017), 192 pp., 115 color and 15 b/w illus. €35, ISBN 9788809856981

Note

1. Sabine Frommel, *Giuliano da Sangallo* (Florence: Edifir, 2014); "Giuliano da Sangallo 1516–2016," study day, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florence, 17–18 Nov. 2016; Amedeo Belluzzi, Caroline Elam, and Francesco Paolo Fiore, eds., *Giuliano da Sangallo* (Milan: Officina Libraria, 2017).

Quest for Beauty: The Architecture, Landscapes, and Collections of John Yeon

Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon

13 May–3 September 2017

It was the compelling power of towering snowcapped mountains, deep forests, and sharp peaks plunging precipitously into the Pacific Ocean that served as the driving force of John Yeon's life. Born in 1910, he grew up in the shadow of an ambitious father who began as a logger, rose to become a leading figure in Portland, Oregon, and in 1913 supervised the construction of the state's first paved highway along the Columbia Gorge, the nation's first scenic route. Equally important was Yeon's mother, whose pioneering family began as homesteaders in Portland in the 1850s and through whom her son acquired an appreciation of the arts. Thus early on Yeon was drawn to the vast scale and powerful pull of the natural beauty of untouched wilderness—the rugged Oregon coastline, the deep Columbia Gorge with its powerful river, the flora and fauna of the forest—but also to the small scale and refinement of fine art.

Having grown up in privileged circumstances and inherited wealth, Yeon turned to architecture in his late teens. He worked summers in the offices of A. E. Doyle, Portland's largest and most successful architectural firm, whose practice followed the classicizing tradition of McKim, Mead & White, and in the office of the Beaux-Arts-trained architect Herman Brookman. Granted access to their extensive libraries of architectural books, Yeon acquired a knowledge of and taste for European traditions at once Palladian and English picturesque. His interests were broadened by a trip to Europe in 1928 and by a visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin in Wisconsin. He also developed a love of Asian, especially Chinese, art, which he began collecting as a young adult, as well as an Arts and Crafts sensibility. This last was acquired through

Doyle, whose design for a cottage for the painter Harry Wentz on the Oregon coast influenced Yeon. This rich, diverse mix of artistic traditions, coupled with his love of the natural beauty of the Oregon wilderness, shaped Yeon's architectural direction. A decade after his European trip, he designed the 1937 Watzek House, the residence that drew national attention to an emerging Pacific Northwest regional modernism and for which he is primarily known (Figure 1).

However, as shown by the Portland Art Museum's exhibition *Quest for Beauty*, Yeon's legacy in environmental preservation is equal in importance to his other accomplishments. It was an exquisite exhibition, as exacting and low-key in demeanor as Yeon himself. Portraying his multifaceted pursuits, it provided a richly textured picture of Yeon's eclectic tastes as well as the range of scales and diversity of mediums in his work and his collecting, from architecture, landscape design, and environmental activism to his collection of Persian miniatures, Chinese scrolls, surrealist paintings, and Alvar Aalto and French rococo chairs. The exhibition focused on Yeon's lifelong quest for beauty—in his architecture, to be sure, but also in the broader environment, both natural and built. Architecture dominated, but as Yeon was never a licensed architect and his body of built work was small, the exhibition included photos and text of his efforts in landscape design, urban planning, and preservation (much of which was behind the scenes, in planning and lobbying through letters, testimonials, and meetings), focusing on now-famous tourist sites such as Chapman Point on the Oregon coast, Olympic National Park in Washington State, and the Columbia River Gorge (Figure 2). Then, too, there was his extensive art collection. All this was adroitly pulled together into a single cohesive portrait of the man and his all-but-obsessive pursuit of visual beauty.

The exhibition was organized roughly chronologically, with displays of Yeon's architecture, landscapes, and art collection interwoven; thus, beautifully crafted wooden models, original drawings, and photographs of his buildings (the Watzek House, innovations in a series of plywood houses of the late 1930s, and several postwar houses) were displayed alongside enlarged photos of his conservation endeavors and objets d'art mounted on



Figure 1 John Yeon, Watzek House, Portland, Oregon, 1937 (The Carnegie Arts of the United States Collection, University of Georgia Libraries).

pedestals. What held everything together was Yeon's exacting eye and sense of visual order.

With its seemingly studious avoidance of Yeon's role in the larger context of architectural history, the exhibition prompted further analysis—of Northwest regional modernism and of Yeon's relationship with Pietro Belluschi, who was only briefly mentioned, despite the fact that it was in Belluschi's office (then still under A. E. Doyle's name) that the Watzek House was produced. Further, without Belluschi, the house would not have been known to John McAndrew, then curator of architecture and design at New York's Museum of Modern Art; it was also clearly Belluschi who commissioned the famous Walter Boychuk photo, with its "fortuitous shadow" (as Yeon described it in a 1986 lecture), that led to the building's fame.

Then, too, the Watzek House, now a National Historic Landmark and iconic in discussions of Pacific Northwest regional modernism, might have received more analysis; for example, how, in his first significant built work, was Yeon able to come up with such a polished statement? The accepted view is that it was informed by the Doyle-designed, Arts and Crafts-inspired simple wooden Wentz Cottage, coupled with Yeon's interest in Asian art. But surely there was more to it than that—the influence of Beaux-Arts traditional historicizing architecture, for example, and the legacy of both Doyle's Palladian classicism and Brookman's eclectic manor houses. To my mind, Brookman's Tudor 1925 Fir Acres (today the M. Lloyd Frank Estate and part of the Lewis & Clark College campus), with its banks of mullioned windows and projecting temple

front facing onto a broad landscaped vista with Mount Hood in the distance, subconsciously or otherwise served as a model for the Watzek, endowing it with Palladian poise and stature.

Yeon's innovations in plywood could have used more architectural context. Instructive, too, would have been a comparison between Belluschi's and Yeon's professional practices: the one with an innate classicism absorbed in his native Italy, the other whose classicism was largely academic; the one struggling to maintain the Doyle office after Doyle died and to keep it alive during the lean years of the Great Depression, the other independently wealthy and free of such economic imperatives. Even more intriguing might have been an exploration of the parallels between Yeon and Philip Johnson: both independently wealthy, both immersed in the arts from an



Figure 2 Chapman Point, Oregon, ca. 1940s (photo by John Yeon, courtesy Portland Art Museum).

early age, both taking European trips in the late 1920s, both with close connections to the high-end art world, both architects, both gay. In addition, both designed their own landed estates—Johnson in New Canaan, Connecticut, and Yeon several years later on the Columbia Gorge—sculpting the natural environment to meet their personal psychological and emotional needs.

But again, the exhibition's avoidance of distractions of this nature was no doubt deliberate. Curator Randy Gragg, along with collection exhibition curators Maribeth Graybill and Dawson W. Carr, nimbly sidestepped such contentious issues to focus simply on Yeon and his remarkable artistic legacy.

MEREDITH L. CLAUSEN
University of Washington

Related Publications

Randy Gragg, ed., *John Yeon: Architecture—Building in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Andrea

Monfried Editions, 2017), 240 pp., 40 color and 180 b/w illus. \$60, ISBN 9780991026371

Randy Gragg, ed., *John Yeon: Landscape—Design, Conservation, Activism* (New York: Andrea Monfried Editions, 2017), 155 pp., 70 color and 25 b/w illus. \$30, ISBN 9780991026388

The Japanese House: Architecture and Life after 1945

Barbican Art Gallery, London
23 March–25 June 2017

When reviewing, in these pages, the 2015 exhibition *The World of Charles and Ray Eames* at the Barbican Art Gallery in London, I observed how the building's heavy, windowless gallery had been imbued with some of the sunlight of Southern California.¹ In the recent exhibition *The Japanese House: Architecture and Life after 1945*, curated by Florence Ostende and designed by Lucy Styles, the re-creation by Ryue Nishizawa (the

N in SANAA) of his Moriyama House in Tokyo (2005) made the defamiliarization of the gallery almost complete.

Architecture and life started afresh in Japan after 1945 and the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In architecture, this was demonstrated by the rejection of both *teikan yōshiki*, the Imperial Crown style that recalled the great disaster of the war, and Western modernism, which was the architecture of the conqueror. In their place, Kenzō Tange promoted the *zakuri* style of the imperial villa at Katsura, while Seiichi Shirai turned to the *minka*, the vernacular farmhouse architecture that stretched back to the ancient Jōmon period. Both themes reoccurred in photographs, drawings, and the occasional installation throughout the exhibition. More difficult to identify was “life,” a concept characterized at the beginning of the exhibition by the films of Yasujiro Ozu and Mikio Naruse, which considered major social change from a domestic perspective, using the home as a cinematic space for women's subjectivity and desire. In the same way *teikan yōshiki* was no longer relevant in postwar Japan, so Naruse's *Late Chrysanthemums* (1954)—its title a play, surely, on the fact that the chrysanthemum is the imperial symbol—told the story of four retired geisha trying to make a life in the new order of postwar Japan.

With the scene thus set, the exhibition explained but rarely questioned the various directions of Japanese architecture over the subsequent seventy years. Walter Gropius's enthusiasm for Katsura, for example, was demonstrated by the book that he published with Tange in 1960: *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture*.² Yet while for Tange Katsura presented a study of tradition and creation, for Gropius it offered an unexpected chance to revive the flagging hopes of Western modernism. But, as we know, there was no such revival. What did emerge from Japan, more than from anywhere else, was what Alison and Peter Smithson identified—in the “underlying idea, principles, and spirit” of Japanese architecture—as the New Brutalism.³ This was well expressed in buildings like Junzō Yoshimura's Mountain Lodge A at Karuizawa (1963) and Takamasa Yoshizaka's own house in Tokyo (1955), both rooted in the earth by the visceral nature of their exposed concrete. Yoshizaka built his house, a cross between the formalism of



Figure 1 Installation view of *The Japanese House: Architecture and Life after 1945*, Barbican Art Gallery, London, 2017 (photo by Miles Willis, Getty Images).

the Maison Citrohan and the roughness of the Maisons Jaoul, soon after returning from working for Le Corbusier in Paris, but the exhibition did not explore that possible connection.

Kazuo Shinohara's 1962 declaration that "a house is a work of art" highlighted the tension between the *zakuri* and the *minka*, the formal and the informal, the aristocratic and the plebeian. His assemblage of these contradicting factors was expressed in the anarchic irrationality of his house in Uehara, Tokyo (1976), which, as the exhibition's wall text put it, he used to "carve out a space of creativity and resistance within industrial society." This was convincingly demonstrated in the exhibition by the installation of a treelike concrete structural frame that divided and confused the display space—or, in other words, simply got in the way (Figure 1). Tadao Ando, on the other hand, retreated from the city in his concrete row house in Sumiyoshi, Osaka (1976), as did Toyo Ito in the contemporaneous White U

House in Nakano, Tokyo. Both buildings, shown here in models, internalized exterior space and ignored rather than confronted the chaos of the city around them.

This chaos was first explored by the anthropologist Wajiro Kon following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, a lead taken up in 1986 by Terunobu Fujimori's Roadway Preservation Society, which undertook a photographic survey that, as an exhibition panel described, "embraced the seeming anarchy of the city." Although identified here, in the work of Atelier Bow-Wow and Kumiko Inui, as "the vernacular," this chaos was emblematic of what the exhibition called the "unmarketable." The best example of this was Katsuhiro Miyamoto's ZENKAI House in Kobe (1997). The Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995 had left the building severely damaged, declared by the authorities to be *zenkai*, or completely collapsed, but Miyamoto revived it with a new, exposed-steel structure, thus both retaining the memory of the old house and resisting the will of the authorities.

Chaos and, indeed, anarchy were endemic in Ryue Nishizawa's re-creation of the Moriyama House—a series of seven or eight disconnected white volumes, one-story, two-story, or double-height, linked by small gardens and scaled by white steel stairs with tubular handrails. Populated variously with books, beer bottles, and Harry Bertoia chairs, each individual unit had its distinct function, often spilling out—as evidenced by the shaving bowl and mirror beneath a tree—to colonize the gardens in between. Beyond this domestic-scaled fragmentation of the Japanese city was a peaceful garden and a Japanese teahouse, designed by Terunobu Fujimori and built within the exhibition space by students from Kingston University under the direction of Takeshi Hayatsu. Here, amid this quietude, one was reminded of the constants of traditional Japanese domestic architecture: materials, scale, craftsmanship, and closeness to nature. Removing shoes and entering on hands and knees, one was soon cocooned from

the surrounding confusion of the Japanese city.

If London audiences had been hoping for a convenient narrative, this exhibition did not provide it. Although each well-designed room offered a story, the stories were rarely connected. However, they did prepare visitors for the contradictory experiences of the Moriyama House and Fujimori's teahouse, the materials, forms, and spaces of which could not have been more mutually different. Yet such diversity is typical of the Japanese city; if it was the intention of the exhibition's creators to bring that across, then they surely succeeded. However, for a more informed discussion of the Japanese house, the visitor needed to read the catalogue, where essays by Hiroyasu Fujioka, Pippo Ciorra, Florence Ostende, and Kenjiro Hosaka conveniently fill the gaps.

NEIL JACKSON
University of Liverpool in London

Related Publication

Pippo Ciorra and Florence Ostende, eds., *The Japanese House: Architecture and Life after 1945* (London: Barbican Centre, 2017), 320 pp., 161 color and 109 b/w illus. £35/\$50, ISBN 9788831725767

Note

1. Neil Jackson, review of the exhibition *The World of Charles and Ray Eames*, *JSAH* 75, no. 2 (June 2016), 237–38.
2. Walter Gropius, Kenzō Tange, Yasuhiro Ishimoto (photographs), and Herbert Bayer (book design), *Katsura: Tradition and Creation in Japanese Architecture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960).
3. Alison Smithson and Peter Smithson, "The New Brutalism," *Architectural Design*, Jan. 1955, 1.

Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
23 October 2015–27 February 2016
Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
18 June–9 October 2016
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley
8 February–21 May 2017

In the summer of 1967 nearly 100,000 people made their way to San Francisco, converging in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood during what became known in

the popular press as the "Summer of Love." In retrospect, the events marked more a death knell than a climax, as those at the epicenter well knew. The Diggers, a local radical collective and street theater troupe, staged a funeral service on 6 October 1967 at Buena Vista Park in which participants carried and then set afire a coffin symbolizing the demise of the "hippie," a figure they contended had been conjured by the mass media and commercialized to the point of losing any genuine cultural or political purchase.

"Hippies" and 1967 continue to be easy signifiers, however, and in 2017 numerous cultural institutions in San Francisco dutifully organized commemorations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Summer of Love. These included an exhibition at the De Young Museum focused on "art, fashion, and rock & roll" and local-history-centered shows at the California Historical Society and the San Francisco Public Library. On a different order from these mostly nostalgic and adulatory exhibitions was *Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia*, curated by Andrew Blauvelt. Originally staged at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the version at the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA) was augmented with items selected by University of California, Berkeley, associate professor Greg Castillo; it was also accompanied by an excellent film and lecture series. Given the centrality of Northern California to many of the artists and movements encompassed in the show, this last stop for the exhibition (after one at Cranbrook Art Museum in Michigan) could have been seen as a kind of a homecoming.

Hippie Modernism was both more geographically expansive than the locally oriented celebrations—encompassing countercultural manifestations in both Europe and the United States—and more narrowly focused on art, design, and architecture. On display was an astonishing array of artifacts representing the era's teeming preoccupations, ideas, and tendencies: ecology, cybernetics, new media, computers, LSD, DIY, feminism, social justice, communal living, costumes, performance, sensorial aesthetics, sexual liberation, and more. In terms of architectural history, many now-canonical projects were represented: Superstudio's video *Life: Supersurface* (1972), with its

American hippie figures collaged into gridded deserts; DIY domes and dome cookbooks inspired by Buckminster Fuller; pop-inflected bubbles by Haus-Rucker-Co, Reyner Banham and François Dallegret, and Archigram; and Ant Farm's inflatables and media projects, including an installation of the latest version of the Media Van. These appeared along with less well-known structures like the charming handmade "wood-butchers' " houses photographed by Barry Shapiro in the 1970s (Figure 1). Many of these works and their makers have received a great deal of scholarly attention in the past decade, and *Hippie Modernism* contributes to an ongoing historiographic shift in how we think of the turbulent, experimental period between late modernism and postmodernism, and, more important, how we imagine architecture's capacity to engage critically with sociopolitical and technological change.

In the exhibition, architecture projects were interspersed with a range of other works: paintings thematizing the consciousness-expanding powers of LSD; hallucinatory light-and-sound installations; Black Panther, antiwar, and feminist posters; Evelyn Roth's politically pointed crocheted and knitted masterpieces; and the requisite psychedelic concert and event posters, including the iconic purple-and-gold poster for the "Human Be-In"—a "gathering of the tribes" held in Golden Gate Park on 14 January 1967, which was attended by Allen Ginsberg and Timothy Leary. Also included were documentary materials pointing to the broader cultural and intellectual influences and contexts of these movements, including key texts by Marshall McLuhan, Victor Papanek, and Buckminster Fuller; *Life* magazine covers; and sheets of whimsically printed LSD tabs.

Considering its subject matter, the exhibition was perhaps appropriately free-wheeling and inclusive. Artifacts were loosely organized into the categories "Turn On," "Tune In," and "Drop Out," reprising Timothy Leary's famous phrase, but these groupings tended to blur together in the BAMPFA installation. The show did not try to reconcile the contradictions between, say, the more solipsistic forms of liberation and "consciousness expansion" practiced in some quarters and the more



Figure 1 Barry Shapiro, *Handmade Houses*, early 1970s, digital image from slide (Barry Shapiro photograph archive, BANC PIC 2016.003, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley).

communally oriented activism of the Diggers, the Black Panthers, and others who distributed free food, education, theater, and health care in the streets of San Francisco and Oakland. Nor did it cast judgment on the tension between the blithe techno-utopianism of works like Dallegret's drawings for Banham's 1965 article "A Home Is Not a House"—with their giddy celebration of the car, TV, radio, and other accoutrements of techno-nomadic living—and the anticonsumerist ethos of a

commune like Drop City, whose founders sought a mode of existence outside mainstream capitalist society based on scavenging, reusing, and reanimating its detritus.¹

Such fractures, however, speak to the contradiction at the heart of the exhibition's title: What do modernists (defined broadly as those who believe that progressive, functional, technologically advanced design can improve society) and hippies (those who reject normative bourgeois values and established

institutions) have to do with each other? In his preface to the exhibition catalogue, Blauvelt acknowledges the paradox but argues that the works in the show represent a "momentary reconciliation" exemplified by modernists' and hippies' converging fascination with new media technologies—synthesized sounds, light effects, portable video cameras, computers—as well as the shared dream of both 1960s–70s counterculturalists and the early avant-garde to merge art, life,

and politics. Yet the title fails to convince, in part because it seems to hint at a latent desire for art historical continuities (late modernism transitioning into hippie modernism into postmodernism) when the keynote of so much of the work, as Blauvelt readily acknowledges, is an aesthetics of refusal, a desire to overturn what came before and to throw off established aesthetic conventions in the interest of engaging politics and society more directly. Given the exuberance and seditiousness of the work, the label “hippie modernism” seems like a domestication.

To be clear, the political investments of the counterculture were amply evident in the exhibition, and the conflicts and fault

lines between “hippies” and “modernists” and within different strands of the counterculture are incisively explored in the exhibition catalogue, particularly in essays by Castillo, Felicity Scott, and Simon Sadler. It may be that the critical text is the appropriate vehicle for “dissecting” subject matter, in contrast to the “aggregating” nature of the exhibition as genre. The strength of a show, after all, is to assemble and present to the public a wide array of entrancing, complex, and thought-provoking materials, enabling viewers to form their own judgments, comparisons, and associations. On this score, *Hippie Modernism* did a tremendous service, illuminating a period when a wide range of artists and

designers combined sociopolitical critique with the imaginative projection of alternative and utopian futures.

IRENE CHENG
California College of the Arts

Related Publication

Andrew Blauvelt, ed., *Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2015), 448 pp., 200 color and 80 b/w illus. \$55 (paper), ISBN 9781935963097

Note

1. Reyner Banham, illustrations by François Dallegret, “A Home Is Not a House,” *Art in America*, Apr. 1965, 109–18.